SPARTACIST

Supplement
16 July 2026

From Azad Kashmir to Islamabad

Marxists.com

Down with the Munir regime! Down with the IMF!

The heroic struggle of the people of Azad Kashmir has reached a decisive phase. For weeks, the mass protests have faced murderous repression by the armed forces. When the authorities banned the Joint Awami Action Committee as a terrorist organisation, the movement paralysed the economy for days, and support for the popular revolt has continued to grow. ***Now, the movement must advance or be forced to retreat.***

The battle lines are drawn. On one side stand the masses of Azad Kashmir; on the other, the powerful military regime of Asim Munir. If the struggle does not go forward, the Munir regime will drown it in blood! Make no mistake: the negotiations between the JAAC and the authorities are a ***trap***. These talks only buy the military more time to prepare to crush the movement. To avoid defeat, the movement must extend an appeal to the rest of the country: open up a second front. Unite all the forces of the oppressed and exploited across Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa; hundreds of millions of people are suffering poverty and injustice under Munir's dictatorship. Now is the time to mobilise a campaign of opposition to the hated Islamabad regime.

The demands of the movement—for an end to extortionate prices for electricity and subsidised wheat flour—require a struggle against the

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government and the imperialist loan sharks of the IMF, which is strangling Pakistan's economy. The Pakistan military, under Trump's favourite field marshal, Asim Munir, as well as the Zardari-Sharif government, are tools of the imperialist bloodsuckers and enemies of the people. ***Cancel Pakistan's debt to the imperialists!***

The Kashmiri nation is partitioned and subjugated by both Pakistan and India. Contrary to Pakistan's claim that Azad Kashmir is governed autonomously, its parliament reserves a number of seats, supposedly for "refugees" from Indian-occupied Kashmir. The movement vehemently opposes this system, which allows Islamabad to exert political control. The Kashmiri nation must be freed from both India and Pakistan. ***For a united, independent Kashmir!***

Among the left forces active on the ground, supporters of the Revolutionary Communist International argue that the JAAC should take power. This is a recipe for defeat. Without a doubt, the JAAC has mass support and the protests have escalated in the face of state repression. But Azad Kashmir represents ***under 2%*** of Pakistan's population, and the military regime rules the country with an iron hand. Islamabad has dispatched thousands-strong federal armed forces to the area, which is already heavily militarised around the Line of Control, the border with India. The federal government has previously shut down internet access and closed the region's main roads, isolating it from the rest of the country. A direct attempt to seize power in these conditions can only lead to a catastrophic defeat.

The need of the hour is for mass mobilisations across the country, linking the struggle in Azad Kashmir with the broadest possible mobilisation of Pakistan's working masses to undermine the power of the army from within and bring down the hated regime. Only then can there be any talk of the masses seizing power. ■